

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8404

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 2405

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT BM

SUBJECT: BSPP CONGRESS ENDS UNEVENTUALLY

REF: RANGOON 2314

1. THE
SECOND EXTRAORDINARY CONGRESS OF THE BSPP CONCLUDED ITS
THREE-DAY MEETING AUGUST 23; AS USUAL, FEW DETAILS OF ITS ACT-
IVITIES WERE ISSUED PUBLICLY. PARTY CHAIRMAN NE WIN ADDRESSED
BOTH THE OPENING AND CONCLUDING SESSIONS. IN HIS FIRST SPEECH,
NE WIN REVIEWED THE ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED, URGED THE MEMBERS TO
SPEAK FRANKLY, AND WARNED AGAINST ELEMENTS TRYING TO DISRUPT
PARTY EFFORTS THROUGH POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND RELIGIOUS MEANS.
HE ADDED THAT "DISRPUTERS" WITHIN THE PARTY ARE TO BE FEARED
MORE THAN THOSE WITHOUT. IN HIS CLOSING SPEECH, HE TOUCHED
ON RECENT FLOODS AND ON INFLATION, NOTING THAT THE PEOPLE ARE
WELL AWARE OF THE HIGH COST OF LIVING. HE TOOK PAINS, HOWEVER,
TO REAFFIRM HIS COMMITMENT TO SOCIALISM AND CRITICIZED THE EXPLOI-
TATIVE EVILS OF CAPITALISM. HE OFFERED NO SOLUTIONS TO THE
ECONOMIC PROBLEMS FACING THE COUNTRY, URGING ONLY THAT ALL UNITE
TO WORK HARDED "ALONG THE RIGHT PATHS OF ACTION."

2. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, THE CONGRESS ISSUED SIX DECISIONS. IT
BROUGHT THE TERM OF OFFICE OF PARTY UNIT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES INTO
LINE WITH THOSE OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND THE PEOPLE'S CONGRESS
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(EFFECTIVELY EXTENDING THEIR TERMS BY TWO YEARS); APPROVED

DRAFT LEGISLATION FOR SUBMISSION TO THE NEXT PEOPLE'S CONGRESS WHICH WOULD SUBJECT VIOLATORS OF PARTY DISCIPLINE TO CRIMINAL OR CIVIL LAW; ISSUED "GUIDING PRINCIPLES" FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF WORKERS' AND PEASANTS' COUNCIL; PASSED 48 AMENDMENTS TO THE PARTY'S CONSTITUTION; AND ENDORSED NE WIN'S PROPOSAL, PLACED INTO EFFECT AT THIS SESSION: THAT THE SECRET BALLOT BE USED ONLY FOR VOTING IN PARTY ELECTIONS AND THAT VOTING ON ISSUES BE OPEN.

3. COMMENT: THE MAIN RESULT OF THE CONGRESS WAS TO TIGHTEN PARTY CONTROW OVER ITS MEMBERSHIP. PREVIOUSLY, VIOLATORS OF PARTY DISCIPLINES COULD ONLY BE DEMOTED OR EXPELLED; WHEN THE NEW LEGISLATION IS APPROVED, THEY MAY BE PROSECUTED CRIMINALLY AS WELL. BY ELIMINATING THE SECRET BALLOT WHEN VOTING ON ISSUES BEFORE THE PARTY, PARTY LEADERS CAN KEEP A CLOSER CHECK ON ANY REBELS IN THEIR MIDST; AS ONE NEWSPAPER COLUMNIST BLITHELY POINTED OUT, "IT IS A FOOL PROOF WAY OF ASCERTAINING HOW RESPONSIBLE OR CONSCIENTIOUS A DELEGATE MIGHT BE". THERE LAT APPARENTLY NO ACTION ON THE ECONOMIC FRONT, DESPITE WIDESPREAD RUMORS THAT STEPS MIGHT BE ANNOUNCED TO EASE MATTERS.
OSBORN

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